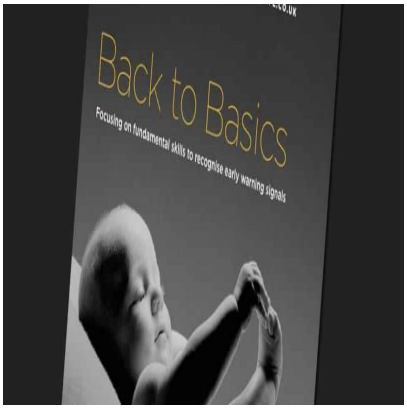

Description

New Look – New Issue

We've been working on a new look Practising Midwife design for the journal – we're really excited about this and we will be moving to this new design soon. We will also be launching a new Practising Midwife website area that will be part of the All4Maternity website – together offering more news, resources and e-learning with other areas specifically for midwives, mothers & families.

We hope you will join us in registering and subscribing to get the latest content which we will be constantly expanding and engaging with the community to bring you the best possible content and resources.


FEATURE ARTICLE

EMPOWER

EMPOWERING MOTHERS, PROVIDING OPTIONS WITH EDUCATION AND RELAXATION

ABSTRACT

Most women within their lifetime will experience pregnancy, birth and motherhood. Despite this almost universal experience, the process is far from uniform. Throughout the childbirth continuumn, expectations and experiences of women are diverse and ever changing (van Teijlingen, Frith & Church, 2017). This article will explore an innovative idea well placed within this 'shiny roads' edition of the Practising Midwife. The birth of the EMPOWER project within one NHS Trust will be explored. EMPOWER was developed to ultimately Empower Mothers and Provide Options Education and Relaxation for pregnancy, birth and the postnatal period.

THE WINDING ROAD AHEAD

Pregnancy, birth and early parenthood is a complex, multidimensional, often misunderstood event that is sometimes feared by those experiencing it. Unfortunately, there seems to be a lack of consistency or value in current methods of preparing women and their partners for this long road ahead. Much antenatal education is focussed on the birth and the early days, in particular options for labour, pain relief and breastfeeding. Discussions around these issues are pertinent and necessary yet often important aspects of preparation are overlooked such as preparing partners, latent labour and supporting women with altered health conditions or complex needs. There is a need for further exploration to highlight the most effective ways of supporting women and their partners in preparing for birth in order to meet their needs, expectations and ultimately improve outcomes (Gagnon & Sandall, 2007)

Childbirth expectations are likely derived from many experiences encountered throughout a woman's life; such as previous exposure, the opinions of others, media influence and cultural background. Teaching women and their partners about birth and parenthood is straight forward, the challenge lies in helping them to trust and believe they can do it to the best of their ability (Daub, 2013). As midwives our role is to educate, support, advocate and care for families throughout the childbirth continuum. However, there is little confirmation that the current ongoing antenatal education pathways are meeting the needs of women in the ever changing maternity system and often complex world.

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LIGHTING THE WAY- EMPOWERING MOTHERS, PROVIDING OPTIONS WITH EDUCATION AND RELAXATION

EMPOWER began as a small idea, sparked by research, passion and a general frustration that there just seemed to be something missing when it came to preparing parents for the process of birth and early parenting. The influential 'self-hypnosis for intrapartum pain management (SHIP) trial' concluded that attending two antenatal self-hypnosis groups didn't reduce labour epidural use but did reduce birth fear and anxiety postnatally, at a very low cost (Downe et al, 2015). Also recent research into the use of complementary medicine techniques in preparation for labour and birth, such as acupressure, relaxation and yoga techniques have found a reduction in epidural use and caesarean section rates (Levett, Smith, Bemioussan & Dahlen, 2016). These

Category

1. News & Views

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1. news

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